No. 105 APRIL — MAY — JUNE 1918

DRAWING WATER IN ARABIA

NEGLECTED ARABIA

CONTENTS

The Arabian Mission

TRUSTEES

Rev. Henry E. Cobb, D.D., *President,*
Rev. J. P. Searle, D.D., *Vice-Pres.,* Rev. J. H. Whitehead,
Rev. Lewis Francis, D.D., Mr. John Bingham,
Rev. T. H. Mackenzie, D.D., Mr. E. E. Olcott.

HONORARY TRUSTEES

W. A. Buchanan, Esq., London, England.
Dean V. C. Vaughan, M.D., Ann Arbor, Mich.
Rev. James Cantine, D.D., Basrah, P. G.
Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D., Cairo, Egypt.

OFFICERS

Rev. W. I. Chamberlain, Ph.D., *Foreign Sec.,*	25 East 22d Street, N. Y
Rev. L. J. Shafer, *Acting Home Sec.,*	25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
Rev. W. J. Van Kersen, *District Sec.,*	Holland, Mich.
Mr. Howell S. Bennet, *Treasurer,*	25 East 22d Street, N. Y.

MISSIONARIES

Rev. and Mrs. James Cantine,	Basrah, P. G.	Evangelistic Work.
Rev. and Mrs. S. M. Zwemer,	Cairo, Egypt.	Literary Work.
Rev. and Mrs. Fred J. Barny,	New Brunswick, N. J.	On Furlough.
Rev. Jas. E. Moerdyk,	Basrah, P. G.	Educational Work.
Rev. and Mrs. J. Van Ess,	Chicago, Ill.	On Furlough.
Miss J. A. Scardefield,	Bahrein.	Evang. & Medical Work.
Miss Fanny Lutton,	Maskat, Arabia.	Evangelistic Work.
Rev. and Mrs. D. Dykstra,	Bahrein.	Educational Work.
Dr. and Mrs. C. S. G. Mylrea,	Kuweit, P. G.	Medical Work.
Rev. Gerrit J. Pennings,	Bahrein.	Evangelistic Work.
Rev. and Mrs. E. E. Calverley,	Kuweit, P. G.	Evang. & Medical Work.
Dr. and Mrs. P. W. Harrison,	Bahrein, P. G.	Medical Work.
Rev. & Mrs. G. D. Van Peursem,	Maskat, Arabia.	Evan. & Medical Work.
Miss Sarah L. Hosmon, M.D.	Maskat, Arabia.	Women's Medical Work.
Miss Gertrud Schafheitlin,	Kuweit, P. G.	Women's Evan. Work.
Miss Charlotte B. Kellien,	Bahrein.	Educational Work.
Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Bilkert,	Bahrein.	Language Study.
Miss M. C. Van Pelt,	Bahrein.	Language Study.

Address all letters to Missionaries in the field, Via Bombay.

The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work, not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will receive quarterly letters and annual reports, without application. All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 East 22d Street, New York.

Neglected Arabia

Missionary News and Letters

Published Quarterly
for private circulation among the friends of
THE ARABIAN MISSION

Basrah, City of Sinbad

Prof. J. C. Archer

This article was sent us by Dr. James Cantine, from Prof. J. C. Archer of the Department of Missions of Yale. Prof. Archer is spending a year in Y. M C A. work among the troops in Mesopotamia. Dr. Cantine came in contact with Prof. Archer through his speaking in the Y. M. C. A. "huts." *The Editor.*

It was "Balsora" when we were boys, the port from which Sindbad the Sailor set out on his marvellous voyages in the days of "the good Harun ar-Rashid." But so strange were the adventures of the Baghdad merchant, I am sure we must have thought his port of sailing as much a fiction as the whale-island or the gigantic Roc.

Later we came to know it as "Bussorah," a real city, a Turkish port and an outpost of the English East India Company. In 1639 two agents of the Company came up from Surat and established a "factory" for the sale of pepper, rice, and Manchester cloth. Now it is Basrah,—as in reality it has always been—a city of the British Empire and the seaport of what is potentially a very valuable area. There have been already here in Mesopotamia large investments in irrigation works and lines of communication, and with a continuance of British control we may expect a development the area deserves, and Basrah will flourish.

The present Basrah is not Sindbad's city; that lay several miles further west, out in the desert. It is rather a pair of towns: Ashar, on the Shatt al-Arab, sixty-five miles from the Persian Gulf, and Basrah City, two miles west of Ashar and connected with it by dirt roads and Ashar Creek. With British occupation the City is rapidly becoming merely a suburb of the busier river-town.

Old Basrah was ten miles from the Shatt—called then the Blind Tigris—but conected with it by two great parallel canals, the Ma'gil to the north, and the Obollo to the south, the latter running into the Tigris by the site of an ancient Roman town named Obollo. Though so far back in the desert, the city's water-way to the sea was shorter than that of Ashar today, for the Gulf coast was then at Abadan which is now twenty-five miles inland. It was built as a garrison city rather than as a port; Arabia then had neither navy nor merchant marine. It was founded in 638 A.D. by order of the Arab Caliph Omar, the second

successor to Mohammed. His armies had wrested Mesopotamia with its delta-paradise from decadent Persia, and were yet to cross the Zagros Mountains and crush Persia herself. And so Basrah—along with Kufa to the northwest, whose foundations were laid the same year—became an outpost of the fast-spreading Arab empire.

It was laid out in plots. In the spacious market-place in the center of the city stood the great mosque, unrivalled in all Irac for its size and its beauty. The principal streets were straight and wide, and there were gardens in various parts of the city. Public baths were established. Soon there was brisk trade in fish and dates. Meat and

BASRAH DRAWBRIDGE

vegetables were plentiful in the markets. But the usual oriental odors abounded, and the people were generally turbulent.

Besides the soldiers, whom Omar denied the right to acquire property, the population of the new city was chiefly Meccans,—less orthodox Moslems than the Medinese who settled Kufa,—and Arabs from the desert round about. The city grew steadily and from the ninth century was, in size and renown, no inconsiderable rival of Baghdad (founded in 762), until the glory of both began to fade after another two centuries.

Old Basrah is now for the most part a mass of low-lying, sand-covered ruins in the midst of the wide desert, barren and yellow until the south wind moistens the desolate scene with rain and patches of green appear where men have scattered seed. It was a brick-built city

whose inhabitants abandoned it long ago to decay and the windblown sand, and, aside from a half-dozen widely separated structures and a small town on its site, it might be quite level today were it not for mounds men have thrown up everywhere in their digging for bricks from the buried walls. Little else is unearthed with the bricks,—coins now and then, bits of glazed pottery, water-jars, copper vessels, and odd trinkets—for the city declined slowly. The town is Zubeir, a community of some ten thousand souls living within the upper section of old Basrah. The buildings which are still standing deserve in themselves no more than brief mention; it is the history they recall which is of great interest to us. They may not be nearly as old as the city, yet their character might explain their preservation from its earliest days.

There's a bulky minaret which rises some forty feet out of the sand, attached to and overlooking the remains of a once fair-sized "mosque of Ali." These ruins may be a monument to the Shiah heresy which sprang up within Islam under Persian influence and in the interest of the Caliph Ali and his sons. Just across the road is an old building, doubtless kept by repair, which serves both as mosque and caravanserai. The one tree of all the southern area stands beside it. A half-mile to the southwest is the solitary "tomb of Talha." He and Zubeir lost their lives in 656 at the Battle of the Camel, when Ayesha's ill-conceived expedition against the Caliph Ali came to naught not far beyond the walls of Basrah. (The site of the battle was known as Wadi as-Sabaa. Is Shaiba the same, where the British recently drove back the Turks after a severe engagement?) Ayesha, Mohammed's favorite, had nursed a bitter hatred of Ali from the time he publicly refused to believe her escape with the youthful Safwan was mere arcident. Talha and Zubeir were nobles of Mecca who thought Ali should have given them important governorships.

Talha's huge brick-made grave rests in a room about twenty-five feet square, roofed over by an inner and an outer dome. The latter is badly broken, but the inner dome is intact and keeps the room comfortable for the pilgrims who come there to worship,—for the rebel Talha, in due course, has become a saint! The "tomb of Zubeir" stands beside the chief mosque in the town of Zubeir. His grave also has become a shrine.

The third important tomb on the site of old Basrah is that of "the saintly Basrite, Hasan." It is suggestive of religion rather than politics. It is the most conspicuous monument in the city of the dead just beyond the northern gates of Zubeir. The building itself is in the form of a stocky, short-sectioned telescope about forty feet high. There are a half-dozen sections, each with twenty sides and adorned with gargoyle-like ornaments at the angles on the upper rim.

Within a century of its founding Basrah became the intellectual capital of Islam, and though it yielded later to Baghdad, it continued to exercise a profound influence over the thought and life of the Moslem world. Here arose the school of "Grammarians," interpreters of the Koran, systematizers of the spiritual property of Islam, and saviors of the pre-Islamic poetry of Arabia, which otherwise would have been

lost to the world. Here was the home of Hariri the poet, who produced in his Assemblies a masterpiece which for eight centuries "has been esteemed as, next to the Koran, the chief treasure of the Arabic tongue, a work which, said Zamakhshari, was "worthy to have each line written in gold." Here the "Sincere Brethren" published tracts against orthodoxy and advocated the hellenization of Islam, the union of the Arabian religion with Greek philosophy. And here, too, the great scholastic theologian Ash'ari lived and taught. For years he proclaimed free-thought in the square of the great mosque, and then, with a change of heart, he became the leading exponent through all the centuries of Moslem faith supported by reason, of orthodoxy rationalized.

Let us return to Hasan al-Basri. In the early eighth century he was a familiar figure in public discussion in the mosque-square of Basrah. He was a great teacher of theology and a famous ascetic. The religion of Mohammed had germs of asceticism in it, but celibacy was explicitly condemned by him by both precept and example. However, the ascetic life was one of the inevitable expressions of Islamic faith. In the early movement in that direction, Hasan was a most conspicuous figure. The Koranic description of the Day of Judgment filled him with terror. "It seemed as though Hell-fire had been created for him alone," and so he renounced the world and determined to live solely for God. He preached fasting as an exercise which God had appointed for his servants "that they may race towards obedience to Him." His fame spread far and men of all faiths came much out of their way to see him and hear him.

He was at first, so they say, inclined to the doctrine of free-will, but gave it up afterwards and held that all except sin happens by fate. Before this change of view, however, he had sown among his pupils seed for the springing up of the significant school of "dissenters," the Mutazilites. Tradition says the movement began one day when a certain man came to Hasan with the question as to whether a Moslem who had committed a great sin was a believer or an unbeliever. While the master hesitated, his pupil Wasil offered the suggestion that the sinner was neither believer nor unbeliever but in a third or middle state. With that Wasil and others withdraw from Hasan's circle. Many other ideas were added to the one which occasioned the secession, and the Mutazilites are well-known to history as those who applied reason to the Koran, and declared it to be a created thing, who held that man has power over his own acts, that God is not the author of evil, and that he would not punish men for actions beyond their control. It was Ash'ari who successfully contradicted all these points and drove the Mutazilites to cover. And his system has had, since the tenth century, general acceptance within Islam. The wild oats of Hasan were gathered in by the faithful sickle of Ashari.

A Visit to Kateef

Rev. G. J. Pennings

Not having seen Kateef before I was happy to accept Dr. Harrison's invitation to accompany him on a visit to Kateef whither he was going to pay his respects to the Ameer and make arrangements for a longer stay in the future to do medical work. Kateef is on the mainland about 45 miles northwest of Bahrein, and the only way of communication between the two is by means of the smaller types of coasting sailboats which constantly ply between the two places. These boats are about 30 feet long with a ten foot beam, and draw about two feet of water when empty. The main body of such a boat is open and the only deck extends for over only the last eight feet in the stern. This place is protected from sun and wind by a canvas covering, and here sits the helmsman with such of the passengers as may be able to find accommodation.

Our boat was to leave at ten in the forenoon. The time of departure of these boats is notoriously uncertain and upon embarking the would be passenger often finds, to his surprise, that the time has been postponed for several hours or even days. For once there was an exception to this rule, for no sooner were we on board but the sail was raised and we were off.

It is well enough to wish a traveler by steamer calm seas, but for the traveler by sail calm weather is about the most undesirable condition imaginable. At sea a contrary wind is even to be preferred to an absolute calm. The foregoing truth we discovered by experience the first day of our voyage out. The wind was hardly sufficient to fill the sail when we started and as the day wore on it became even less. All day long we raced along at almost imperceptible speed so that when evening closed we had not covered more than 15 miles and were hardly out of sight of Bahrein. As soon as it became too dark for the captain to see the landmarks by which he was steering, he gave orders to drop the anchor. We two, together with three or four other passengers, spread our travelling mattresses on the little deck while the crew slept under the open sky in the body of the boat.

The sound that awoke us early the next morning was the stern voice of the captain saying "Abdullah." No answer. Then in a louder voice "Abdullah! gum, sully," Abdullah, stand up and pray! And thus one by one the members of the crew were aroused from their pleasant slumbers to the stern realities of their religious duties. None displayed much alacrity to perform his morning ablutions in the cold sea-water preparatory to reciting his prayers. But finally all were awake and performing their prayers in various parts of the boat wherever they could find sufficient place to go through their prostrations. Some went about it with an air as though they were performing a rather arduous and distasteful, though necessary, duty. According to Mohammedan tradition neglect of the prayers is almost equal to being an unbelieving Kafir. This doubtless explains why Mohammedans constantly exhort one another to the performance of this part of their religious duties.

After the prayers had been said sail was hoisted. Again there followed a day of light wind, though slightly better than the day before, so that we reached Darein at about 3 P.M. To get to Kateef about three miles farther, the boat had to wait about an hour for the tide to rise, which gave us the opportunity of going ashore to pay our respects to sheikh Jassim of Darein. We met with a most cordial reception. This same sheikh, who refused to allow Dr. Harrison admission when he first applied, entertained him and Mrs. Harrison for six weeks last summer while he was doing medical work among the divers.

A half hour's sail brought us to Kateef for the breeze had now become quite brisk. The water in front of Kateef is very shallow. At low tide the bottom is uncovered for a distance of at least a quarter of a mile in some places, and at high tide boats drawing two feet of water cannot get nearer than about 1000 feet from the nearest land. Dr. Harrison ventured to wade ashore from the boat but I waited for a smaller row-boat hoping that it would take me to land. But after going about a half of the distance it also grounded, so that I also had to remove shoes and socks to wade ashore. Removing one's footwear and wading ashore presents no special difficulty: to draw it on again over wet feet on a sandy beach is another story. However we got to Kateef at about sun-down, where the Ameer gave us a hearty welcome. This Ameer does not rule in his own right but is the personal representative of Abel Aziz bin Saoud, the ruler of Nejd, and rules the place for him. His treatment of Dr. Harrison was most cordial, and he showed me also no little kindness even though I was a minister of what was to him a false religion. In him we had another example of the benefits of medical work. This man who first gave the doctor a scant welcome and tried once to forbid all religious work in connection with the medical work, now received us both most heartily and himself provided most suitable quarters for doing medical work next summer without making any restrictions whatsoever in regard to religious work.

The name Kateef applies in general to the whole settlement and more particularly to the main city. The settlement owes its existence to a large number of tepid springs, some say more than two hundred, which water the date-gardens. Some of these springs are large and constantly pour forth a stream of considerable size. Naturally the water is carefully husbanded so as to water as large an area as possible. The date-gardens extend along the shore for about 15 miles to a depth varying from a few hundred yards to about four miles at the broadest.

Kateef city is rather small and very compact. It is surrounded by a heavy wall in fairly good repair, which is pierced by gates at only three points. The interior is rather disappointing. The streets are narrow, dirty and irregular beyond the average, and the interior of the houses were dingy to say the least. Large sections lie in ruins and testify to a greater glory of former days. Some walls still standing and marks on the walls of adjacent houses indicate that many of these buildings were three stories high. Scattered through the gardens are walled villages of varying size, though none, to be sure, have walls as thick as those of Kateef city itself. Till about five years ago when

Bin Saoud took the place from the Turks and all raids stopped, these walls were of very practical and immediate importance. Kateef settlement with its abundant date-gardens was to the hungry Bedouins of the desert a rich prize, a very garden of Eden, which they were never tired of looting. Sometimes during the date season especially, the Bedouins would besiege a village for months at a time while they helped themselves to the date-crop. Many a wounded man caught unawares by the Bedouins in their raids has been brought to the Bahrein hospital in times past. But the bitter retribution that Bin Saoud now meets out to all transgressors has made raiding too dangerous a pastime even for Bedouins, some of whom sigh for the good old times when the strongest and nimblest helped himself. But the people of Kateef now breathe more freely, and many now build their homes outside the village walls. Among the gardens there are many beautiful scenes along paths skirted by rivulets of running water from some nearby spring. Among the date-trees grows a variety of other fruit trees, while much of the ground under the trees is devoted to alfalfa and vegetables. Next to each large spring is usually a small mosque, placed there doubtlessly because of the abundance of pure water to perform the necessary abolutions. On the second day of our stay we made a visit to Tarutan island about two miles from Keteef and opposite it. The two places are connected at low tide, so that it was possible for us to ride over on donkeys by choosing the right time. The special point of interest is the huge ruined castle near the large spring that supplies most of the water for the gardens. This castle, which was built some hundreds of years ago, is now a complete ruin and is no longer used, but from its elevated tower one gets a magnificent view of the surrounding gardens and Kateef in the distance.

Could these old ruins relate their history we would hear many a strange and romantic story of the distant past when Portugese and Dutch successively captured, controlled and lost the Gulf till the last was finally displaced by the growing power of the British who till the present day retain the balance of power. The Arabs lack the historic sense. The ideas of the past are of the vaguest. To our question as to how long the castle had stood we get such enlightening answers as "Since ancient times" or still more exact "God knows." Of what practical importance can it be for a man to peer curiously into the dead past!

Having finished our business we were ready to return by the evening of the second day of our stay. A boat loaded with bundles of date-branches was to sail for Bahrein that very evening at about ten o'clock. When we got on board, after some difficulty, for again we had to wade out some distance, we found that some 20 more passengers had preceded us on board and had occupied the small deck to its full capacity. So we had to spread our mattresses on the date branches, where we spent a somewhat restless night because the thicker parts of the branches insisted on making their presence felt through the rather thin traveling-mattresses. This time we were not as fortunate as to the time of our departure. The captain did not arrive till the receding tide had grounded the boat and leaving was impossible till the next tide

12 hours later. At last the "gum, sully" informed us that morning was near and with it the tide to carry us out into the open. The wind was favorable and by sunrise we were well under way. At the speed we were going we hoped to be in Bahrein at least by sundown. But the wind died down slowly so that at last it came to a dead calm. Chips thrown into the water floated ahead of the boat. By sundown we had just gotten in sight of Bahrein and the sailors not knowing their exact position decided to cast anchor. So we prepared ourselves for another night on the date-branches. Happily for us we availed ourselves of the kind offer of the sailors to spread some sail cloth over us, for without it the two or three small showers during the night would have made us decidedly uncomfortable. As it was the water soaked through in only a few spots and we remained comparatively dry.

The morning dawned with clear skies and a favoring wind so that we reached the shore at about ten o'clock. Here we met the rest of our fellow-missionaires in Bahrein just ready to embark to meet the new missionaires Rev. and Mrs. Bilkert and Miss Van Pelt. A stiff breeze and a good boat soon brought us to the steamer where we were most happy to welcome the new recruits to our forces in Arabia.

A Madina Man Baptized

(Sent by Miss Gertrud Schafheitlin from "Missionaires to Muslims League")

A missionary of the Egypt General Mission writes from Belbeis to his mission paper:

"Concerning our Arabian friend, Hanna: He is a pure Arab from Madina, one of the sacred cities of Islam, a place in which it is, humanely speaking, impossible for a Christian to live. He was brought to the Lord through another convert from Islam in a town on the Persian Gulf (Bahrein). On returning to Madina to fetch his wife and children he was terribly ill-treated, and sentenced to be hanged by the Muslim Court. In the mercy of God he escaped and came to Egypt. After a long search for work he turned up in Belbeis, and we found something for him to do in our compound. Since coming to us he has been set upon twice, the first time being found unconscious on the ground. He is possessed of a bulldog obstinacy, which makes him rather difficult to deal with at times, and he is quite fearless, and is ready to suffer further if need be. But with all his faults he is very sensitive to the Spirit's working, and one can watch him getting victory. We had the joy last November of seeing him confess Christ in baptism—perhaps the first man from Madina who has ever taken this step. He is longing to become an evangelist, and is seeking to prepare himself with all his heart for this work. So we pray for him that the obstinacy and fearlessness of his natural character may, under the power of the Holy Ghost, be mellowed into strong resolution and wise tactfulness until he becomes a mighty firebrand for God."

Muscat in Winter

Rev. G. D. Van Peursem

So much has been said about the heat of Muscat that the place is proverbially signified by the people of the Gulf as Gehennam. Many people seem to think in fact, that gazelles are always found roasted in the desert sun, and that the soldier must watch lest his sword melts in the scabbard. Some folks believe anything about Muscat, howsoever bad it may be. I am writing no apology for the climate of Muscat, for no one will deny that the summers are most oppressively hot and steamy. But we must disabuse our minds of the idea that Muscat is always a steaming caldron or a roasting pot.

REV. G. D. VAN PEURSEM AND AN ARAB FRIEND

From November to March the weather is good and one can be very comfortable. In winter the weather is more pleasant than it is in many places of the Gulf. During these months the thermometer ranges from 65 degrees to 75 degrees. Sixty degrees is the minimum of temperature in Muscat. When the atmosphere cools down that much, the sun feels good along the house, and away from the wind.

During these months life is renewed, and Muscat is really alive if it ever is. Nature then assumes an entirely different aspect. The land between these rocky hills, scorched by the summer's sun, seems unable

to produce a thing. But the trees become green, and the grass, sown along the way, refreshes the eye of the passerby. And occasionally too, a flower is brought in to make us think of home. These are not all of paper either. We enjoy a little bit of vegetable from our mission compound every day—truly a blessing in a land like this. Can this be the Gehennam of the Gulf? Possibly in summer, but certainly not in winter.

When the heat begins to grow intense, people begin to flow out of the city into the country. So in winter there is a natural influx from outside into the city of Muscat. The business man again resumes his work towards the end of the summer, the missionary takes up his labors with new courage after his return from India in September or October, and Muscat becomes again a place of life and activity

LANDING PLACE, MUSKAT

to most of its inhabitants. The Sultan has a fairly good band, with a Goanese director and all the other players from Muscat itself. This gives no little amusement to the people in winter. And there are many other amusements, good and bad.

Even though the relations between the Sultan of Muscat and the inland tribes are strained and practically cut off, so that but for the British Government and army, there would be actual warfare today, in spite of this, people come from the interior of Oman. Just this week a prominent Sheik, with a retinue of armored servants, just come from the interior, called at the mission house. No doubt by this time a price is set upon his head for coming to Muscat into the enemy's camp. Also many people come in from India, Beluchistan, Afganistan and Zanzibar, so that Muscat becomes a conglomeration of peoples and

tongues during the winter. The British and Indian soldiers, however, do not flock to Muscat in winter, due to the fact that they are not permitted to leave in the summer. The inland tribes would be most likely to fall upon us when they thought that the British were on their holiday in India. Thanks to them for keeping the place safe. They are ever on the watch!

Work suspended in summer, is resumed in winter. There is little use for the business man to remain here in summer when the inhabitants leave. Likewise for the missionary, could he endure the heat, it would scarcely pay to stay in Muscat during the summer months. At present, Jan. 29, our school is in full swing, but in a few months we will have to close. Boys study with great determination, and it seems no burden for them to retain what they daily acquire. They too seem to realize that the opportunities for education are few, the time short, and that they must make hay while the sun does not shine too hot. This is quite a sound reason for making the winter months count in the school. Pupils come from Mutra and the other outlying villages, and it would be next to impossible to cross these bare rocky hills in the heat of summer. To cross them now is recreation, but in summer hardship. The winter is the golden opportunity for the school boy. Then, too, the work in winter is so much easier and agreeable for the teacher.

What is true for the school work is also true for the other departments of our work. Miss Lutton systematically visits every house in the city. She of necessity must do much of her work in the cooler time. Then the women can be met in closed rooms, and confidential talk can be engaged in, without fear of any one listening from the roof of a neighboring house. On Sunday morning the women of the community are gathered into our little chapel. This winter, on a few occasions, the building was not large enough to seat all who came, of men, women and children. Very few of these would enter our chapel were it not that they are habitually visited by the missionary during the week. And that is no little task for our ladies. Not a few of those who come are friends of the hospital and of our doctors. Their good services they cannot forget. As malaria increases in winter the doctor is very busy, not only in the hospital but also at out calls, which have to be made on foot. All this in winter is work, but pleasant work, while in summer the same thing becomes a tremendous tax on strength. In this way our work is tied together, and each contributes his part to making Christ king in Arabia.

This shows that a year in Muscat is very short, only about six months in which one can sow the seed. What we can do however, during the other six months of the year is pray. Pray that the seed sown in the winter may not dry up and die in the summer; that God's spirit may work in the hearts of the people even while the missionary is gone in the summer. The evil one is ever busy and he has much opportunity here to undo what we do. We have the promise, however that His Word shall not return to Him void.

Where Mullas Are Doctors

Edwin E. Calverley

"What do you suppose I have just seen?" exclaimed an excited Jew to a Christian in a Moslem city of Arabia.

"What was it? Where did you see it?"

"There was a whole group of Arab women standing outside the big door of the mosque and they all had cups or glasses in their hands."

"Oh, they were beggars, and they were waiting for the men to get through reciting their prayers."

"But no, they were not beggars, because I saw the beggars at another door, and besides, I watched the men as they came out of the mosque, and, it is hard to believe it, they spat right into the cups and glasses and bowls that the women and children and even men held out to them. Some of the Moslems spat into one cup after another,—into every cup that was put near them. I never saw the like in all my life!"

"That is indeed most strange and revolting! What were they doing it for? I'm sure I don't know! Why don't you go and ask some Moslem about it?"

Soon he came back, utterly disgusted.

"Did you find out what the purpose is?"

"Yes, and that is the most repulsive thing of all! I wouldn't have believed it about them if anybody but one of their own religion had told it to me. *Those people with the cups and bowls have some friend or some one in their family who is sick, and they are collecting the spittle of the men who have just finished their prayers for their sick ones at home.*

When I learned of the custom I decided to investigate it. I had never heard of the practice, nor do I remember ever having seen it referred to in any of the books on Arabia and Islám that I have read, although these books tell of even worse features of Moslem life. Others who have lived longer in Arabia than I, said they had never heard of the practice, and some native Christians, who have lived all their lives among Moslems, did not know of the custom. I watched the practice on several Fridays, and took a number of pictures without hindrance.

"Yes," my Moslem friends told me when I asked them about it, "it is an accepted custom. It is related to the reciting of the Koran over a glass of water that a sick person is to drink. That is done especially by mullas and *sayyids* (descendants of the prophet), but anybody is allowed to do it. During or after the sunset prayers is the favorite time for the common people, and especially on Friday after the noonday sermon is their blessing beneficial."

"Do you mean then that they are only supposed to 'recite' over the bowls and bless them, and that the spitting is unnecessary If so, why do some of the cups have nothing in them to recite over, and why do the people really spit into them?"

"Well, not everybody does it. Some just make out as if they were doing it."

"Why don't you admit it all?" said another of the Moslems present during the discussion. "Yes, sahib, they do actually expectorate into them."

"What is the foundation of the custom? Is there anything in your Koran telling you to do that?"

They thought awhile.

"There is for the reciting. There is the verse that says, 'We send down what is a healing and a mercy to the Believers' (Sura XVII, 84 vide Lane's "Modern Egyptians," Everyman's Library p. 260). And that is also the reason why Koran verses are written on pieces of paper with saffron ink and then washed off and drunk by sick people."

"But what is the basis for the spitting? There must be one. Isn't it true that everything in your life is regulated by your traditions and has a religious reason or explanation?"

"Well," one of them said, "there is a saying common among us: 'The saliva of a believer will cure a believer.' But that is not in the Koran."

They seemed rather glad of that. My informants were the young men of my English night school. Some of them had been with us a long enough time to learn about germs and contagion, and none of them cared to defend the custom we were discussing. If it were merely a local practice, their religion would not be responsible for it, although nearly all the 50,000 people in our town are Moslems, and fifty mosques testify to the religious fervor of the men here. I asked them:

"Is the custom confined to this town or is it a general one in Moslem lands?"

"Oh, it is all over Arabia," they said. They mentioned the other cities of the Persian Gulf, as well as Bagdad.

"How about Persia?" I asked.

"In Persia only the people who know how to read are allowed to do the expectorating. The others are only allowed to blow into the bowls."

"Do they do it in your country?" I asked an Afghan Moslem who was one of our number.

"In Afghanistan they do the reciting but not the spitting. In India the Moslems do both."

"Do they do it anywhere else?" I continued.

The best-informed Moslem in our group said: "I doubt not it is done in Egypt, but perhaps not a great deal there."

Why isn't something done to stop it?" I urged. As soon as one finds out about such an injurious and irrational practice as that one wants to see it stopped. It is most pitiable that people so eager for the welfare of their loved ones are still permitted to use such repulsive measures, which can only disappoint hope and increase disease. "Why don't your mullas and religious teachers preach against it. Surely they know enough about its harm and evil to disapprove of it. Surely they know how tuberculosis and other diseases are spread abroad."

"No indeed," they replied. "Our mullas would not stop it. I have heard of only one mulla who disapproved of it and he did not belong

here. He came from Morocco. Our mullas are the very ones who encourage it among the people, and as for the reciting over potions for the sick,—a good many of them make money by the business."

"Something must be done about it."

"It would not do any good for you or anyone else to preach against it. They would say to you: 'This does not concern you. You are a *kafir,* an unbeliever, and you cannot understand or appreciate what we do. Do not enter into what is none of your business!'"

We have become missionaries partly because of a belief that we are our brothers' keepers, and our life and work would be very disappointing if we could not hope to combat with some success so mistaken a practice as that. That thought led to the next question:

"But surely, you who have seen our hospital, and are acquainted with our doctors, and our methods, know that such treatment cannot cure anyone, but rather spreads disease?"

"Oh," said our best-read Arab, "I have not been doing it for five years, and when a cup is passed around a company of my friends in a mosque or *mejlis,* nowadays, I notice that an increasing number of them turn aside and refuse to contribute, with some such remark as, 'I do not know what good it will do.'"

It may be only a coincidence, but it certainly is a fact, that our mission has been established in this town only a little over five years. Perhaps also the mulla from Morocco learned to disapprove the custom because his country has been under modern influence for over a generation.

My Moslem friends could not give me the religious authority supporting their unhygienic custom, but such authority exists nevertheless. Al Bukhari (Sahih vii p. 150) gives two traditions reporting Muhammad's sanction for the practice. After recording the usual "chain" of witnesses, Al Bukhari relates that "Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) told a sick man, 'In the name of Allah the earth of our land and the saliva of some of us cure our sick, by the permission of our Lord.'"

When the practices that religious authorities sanction are wrong, then those authorities are discredited and such practices are arguments against the validity of their religion. Islám presents many such arguments against its own validity. Al Bukhari (idem p. 158) also gives the tradition concerning another custom almost as harmful as the spitting practice. This custom I was introduced to one day when I was entertaining an Arab friend. We were having tea on the verandah of the native house we then occupied and a fly fell into his cup. I was surprised to see him take the spoon and shove the fly to the bottom of the cup and then scoop it out and throw it away.

"Flies are bothersome and very dirty," I remarked as I changed his cup.

"Oh, we don't mind them," he said. "We would not have thrown that tea away."

"Why not?" I asked.

"What we are taught to do if a fly falls into a cup of tea or a

glass of milk is not to pick it out right away, but to push it all the way in and then to pull it out."

"What do you do that for?"

"Because, you see, the wing on one side of a fly carries disease and the wing on the other side carries healing, but we do not know which is which, so, to be sure to get the healing, we push the fly all the way in before we take it out."

What Al Bukhari says is "that the Apostle of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, 'If a fly falls into a vessel of any one of you let him immerse all of it and then throw it away, for, verily, in one of its wings is healing and in the other is disease.' "

These customs have had so general an acceptance and so much authority behind them that they will not disappear easily. The instruction they have been given that their unhygienic practices are really beneficial does not leave them open-minded to recognize the harm. The wrong idea shuts out the right one. The Arabs have a custom that illustrates this truth exactly. One day as I was walking along the road out here I caught up with an Arab going in the same direction. He had a very dirty end of his flowing head-dress stuck into one of his nostrils.

"What have you got that stuck into your nose for?" I asked after the usual greetings.

Without a word he lifted his dress to his knees and showed me a bad sore on his leg. That was all the explanation needed, he thought.

"Will it matter if I take a whiff of perfume or smell the aroma of our cooking?" is a question that the patients are constantly asking of our medical missionaries. The reason behind the Arab's silent act and the patients' question is the same. Pleasant smells make ulcers and cancers and other diseases worse.

To prevent such fragrant odors reaching them accidentally the Arabs tie asafœ dita or garlic or some other horribly smelling stuff into the ends of their head-dress or into a rag and stick it into their nose. "The strong and unpleasant odor," they say, "saturates the brain, so that sweet odors will not affect it."

Just as the Arabs fill their brains with evil smells with the express purpose of excluding pleasant odors, in the belief that good scents will harm them, so the Moslems have their life and religion filled with evil and irrational practices which hinder them from receiving truth that will benefit their souls and bodies.

But what will happen when the Arabs and Persians, the Egyptians and the sixty millions of Moslems of India, do learn that many of their religious customs are most inimical rather than in the least helpful to their health and happiness? Almost every custom they have is attributed to their prophet Muhammad. And when the Moslems learn that their most revered religious authorities, from Muhammad down, were wrong in making saliva a medicine to be taken internally or externally, and were wrong in saying that flies carry healing on their wings, and in instituting many other social wrongs, they will be more ready to believe that they were wrong also in claiming that Muhammad was a prophet from God with authority to tell the world how to worship and love God and love and serve mankind.

The Capital City of the Empire of Mohammed

P. W. Harrison, M.D.

The last Number of Neglected Arabia contained a brief statement of the Tour to Riadh by Dr. Harrison, taken from the Annual Report of the Arabian Mission. In view of the importance of this event, we feel that it is worth while to publish in addition the following detailed account of the journey, sent by Dr. Harrison.

The Editor.

DR. HARRISON IN ARAB COSTUME

The empire of Mohammed embraces many races and extends to many lands. In it are many cities larger than any in Arabia. The Noisy Literary Propaganda of Islam has its center far away in Egypt, and the fading glory of its Political power has been for many years in Turkey. But the essence of the strength of Islam is not its political power, nor its literature. The faith of Mohammed has marched victoriously through thirteen centuries and conquered every system in its path, because of its unparalleled grip on the hearts of men. The marvel of Islam is not the wasting of land after land with fire and sword and license, but the transformation of those same lands into its own fanatical devotees. Every land has a small nucleus of men whose primary interest in life is their religious faith. For that faith they live and for it they would be glad to die. It is safe to say that no system of faith in the world commands such intense devotion on the part of such a large percentage of society as Islam. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the educated and the uneducated, are alike in this the supreme devotion of their hearts.

Now the capital of Islam's political organization has been for a long time in Constantinople. Where it will be after this war, no one knows. The Center of its small store of literary ideas, and its very large store of literary words is in Cairo, Egypt, but the empire of men's hearts over which Mohammed rules has a different Capital from either of these, and that Capital is a small city in the midst of the deserts of Arabia where the pleasant things of this world are hardly known, and where the proud, austere, sterile desert seems to find its reflection in the hearts of men and in their religious faith.

It has always been the hope and the prayer of the Arabian Mission that the way might be opened for the entrance of the Gospel into that city. Men have prayed for it at home and have worked for it on the field, and now apparently we are beginning to see the answer. On invitation from the chief, that city has been visited by a missionary. A medical visit of twenty days is not a great thing, but by God's blessing it may easily be the first step toward the occupation of the most stragetic point in the whole empire of Islam.

The receiving of the invitation was no accident. It meant much work and some strategy. It was the result of the definite efforts of practically every member of our Medical staff for the past ten years. We trust that in a far deeper sense it is the fruit of the prayers of many years both at home and abroad. Some lessons may perhaps be drawn from it. If anywhere in the world we might have expected God's blessing to attend the policy of partial concealment and disguise of our Evangelistic purpose, it would have been here. The city we wanted to enter was the most bigoted in all Arabia. As a matter of fact success so far has come from following precisely the opposite plan.

When Kateef was occupied by the Arabs, there seemed some chance for us to enter it, and the temptation to avoid the Kateefees in the Evangelistic work of the Bahrein Hospital was very strong. I remember how after considerable struggle it was decided to be absolutely as aggressive as possible with them and to trust the Lord as to the result. That same year we were received into Kateef with a cordiality

and heartiness almost unique in the Mission's history. On our first visit there the Ameer told us to get out of the city if we did not drop the Prayer services which preceded the morning clinics. We declined to drop them, and he found a way to allow us to remain. That fanatical Wahabee Mohammedan has become, I think, quite the warmest personal friend that I have among the Arabs, and it was his personal effort that finally secured for us the invitation to come into the Capital city for a medical visit. It is a lesson that some of us apparently must be taught over and over again, that the accomplishment of the difficult things in the Kingdom depends on how well our work pleases God, and not at all on how well it pleases men.

The trip itself was most interesting. A delightful sail of two days took us to Ojeir. Bin Saoud the great chief of Riadh rules and the days of corrupt Turkish officials are over. An old friend from Kateef was in charge, and it was a real pleasure to meet him again. From Ojeir to Hassa is perhaps forty miles, done in one night on either donkeys of an unusually sturdy breed, or on camels. Yellow sand drifts, some of them a hundred feet high constitute practically the whole landscape. However in places where the drifting of the sand has uncovered the soil underneath, fresh water can be found only a foot or two from the surface. We travelled from three in the afternoon until sundown through these desolate sand drifts. Then it was time for supper. All we needed to do was to hollow out a shallow basin in the ground between two drifts, and we had all the fresh water we wanted.

Our first stop was Hassa the paradise of Arabia. The graceful date palms against the yellow sand drifts, make a wonderfully beautiful picture. Where all the fresh water comes from that makes Hassa a tropical garden, is more than an ordinary man can imagine. Certainly the sunbaked desert inland can hardly furnish it. Date gardens stretch for miles in every direction, and marvellous to relate, the water is so abundant that there is plenty for wheat and even rice in addition. Figs abound as do pomegranates, apples and peaches and apricots. Cantaloupes are raised in great profusion. It is the garden spot of Arabia. Seventy odd cities of various sizes are scattered through the gardens. Perhaps from one to two hundred thousand people live in them. The inland Bedouins come here by thousands to do their trading. They bring wool, and hides, and ghee or clarified butter. Goats and sheep and camels are sold also. Thursday is market day, and State Street in Chicago can hardly surpass the Hassa Bazaar, then.

The Turks ruled this district for fifty years more or less, but they have hardly left a trace except the cordial hatred of everyone. No schools were founded, no better ways of building were introduced They are gone now, and in their place sits the Ameer of the great chief of Riadh, a man whose very name is enough to strike terror into the heart of the most reckless Bedouin. The city is drastically but most efficiently governed. Infractions of the public order are punished in ways that make the blood run cold, but a more orderly city could hardly be found in America. In the old days two regiments and more of Turkish soldiers were not sufficient to keep even the road to Ojeir open.

We stayed in Hassa four days, and then pushed on toward the city of the desert which is the center of the political and religious life of

Arabia. It was mid-summer, and none of us suffered from chilblains or had his ears frozen. Altogether we made a caravan of nine camels. One of the camels carried silver, government revenue, from Hassa to Riadh. The value of that camel's load was somewhere about twelve thousand dollars, according to reports, but it was quite unaccompanied by guards. So complete is the safety of the country under its present ruler, Bin Saoud, that this excited no surprise or comment. Three camels carried the Doctor and his supplies including an assistant. The remainder of the caravan was made up of five camels ridden by travellers who happened to be on their way towards the same city as ourselves. We rested for something like three hours at noon, for an hour or thereabouts at sundown, and for perhaps two hours just before dawn. The rest of the time was spent in the saddle, for the five days of the trip.

One of my fellow travelers was greatly troubled over the fact that I did not join in the daily prayers of the caravan. He came to the guide in great concern. "That man," he whispered, "doesn't pray." "Oh well," said his more sophisticated companion, "Never mind, he is on his way to Bin Sacud, and he is a great Doctor." "I tell you," said the old patriarch, "that he does not pray." The old man was greatly perturbed. I am sure he anticipated for the whole caravan a fate such as Jonah brought on his fellow travellers. However at noon when we were resting, I found him trying to mend his torn robe without needle or thread, and I brought him a fine thick needle, and a long strong thread, and he was delighted. He mended that hole, and various others which he discovered. His thread had to be replenished several times, and the matter of neglected prayers ceased to trouble his mind. I used to give his small boy, who was travelling with him, some of my bread, and after that I had two firm friends in the caravan, at least. In fact by the time we reached Riadh we were all the best of friends, and parted with real regret.

There may be countries in this world more barren and empty than the deserts of central Arabia, but the difference cannot be very great. For days and days we traveled and did not see a single individual, and the only life of any sort was an occasional lizard, one variety of them indeed, a foot and a half long. These brilliant green creatures are considered a great delicacy by the Bedouins. My own appetite for meat was not strong enough to make me care for any. My assistant, a Shiah Mohammedan, was horrified, for such animals are most unclean to them. The Bedouins caught one, and he begged that such a man be not allowed to help prepare our evening meal. There were many lizards of smaller varieties too, and an occasional Jereboa, a sort of mouse with long hind legs. He too was cooked and eaten with no ceremony. In addition there were many Gazelle, the greater part of them in places far away from any water that even the Arabs knew anything about.

Most of the country was a rocky plain, with gentle slopes, which might perhaps be quite fertile, if there were only a sufficient rainfall. For parts of two days we travelled over a country as black as an asphalt roof, the earth underneath of solid rock, apparently volcanic

in character. We spent nine hours in passing across an arm of the Great Dahna or sandy desert of Inland Arabia. It was a repetition of the road between Ojeir and Hassa, covered with enormous sand drifts, but strange to say, with quite an abundant vegetation, for the most part died down by the heat and the drought of Summer. In the Spring there is a little rain which is sufficient to nourish a really surprising amount of vegetation. To my very great surprise there were several varieties of plants which were beautifully green even in the middle of an unusually hot Summer. No water was to be had for a hundred miles in any direction, even out of wells that may be a hundred and fifty feet deep, yet this district is full of Gazelle. We shot one and that day we had meat to eat. All the water that these animals get, must come from the few plants that remain green throughout the Summer. How any plant can do it, is a marvel. I remember a beautifully green one with leaves not unlike those of a milkweed, perched on the top of a sand drift fifty feet or more high. No mountains are seen on the trip, though in a few places the travelling is a little rough. In Summer from Hassa to Abu Jaffan where the first well is found, is a trip of three days with hard travelling. The remaining two days we travelled over a country where occasional wells are to be found, and where human habitations are not entirely absent.

We reached Riadh about midnight, and after the fashion of the Arabs we slept outside the city and entered early in the morning. The air is wonderful in that dry desert country, and a walk in the early morning before the sun has baked the earth into submission, is better than any tonic. We walked through the city gates. It is a serious breach of etiquette for an ordinary mortal to ride under those circumstances. No one stopped us and in a few minutes we had reached the castle of the chief whose name is a household word all over Arabia, and around whom center the affections and the loyalty of the whole Wahabee wing of Mohammedanism.

I told the doorkeeper who I was, and asked him to inform the Chief that the Doctor from Bahrein had arrived. Then I sat down on a seat outside the door to await my invitation to enter. One of the "Brothers" a fanatically orthodox religious order of Inland Arabia, came and took his seat beside me. He looked at me critically. I wore Arab clothes of course, but he knew that I was no Arab. "Do you testify that there is no God but God," he asked sharply. I assured him that I did. "Do you testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God." I told him that I did not. This however did not seem to distress him greatly, for this particular sect in their search for a faith that shall be purely Monotheistic has almost ceased to revere Mohammed.

I went up to see the Great Chief himself then, a man whose personality and character stamp him as one of the world's kings. Never perhaps since the days of the Prophet himself has Arabia been united as it is now, and no one marvels who meets the man who has united them. I have never been entertained by a more courteous and gracious host anywhere, and have never seen, I think, a man of more perfect democracy of spirit. A small child does not fear to speak to him, and it is only by accident that the elements in his character and rule which are like iron appear. It was by the murder of relatives that he

gained his present position, and it is by a rule of blood and iron that he has subdued the unwilling Bedouins so that now as the Arabs say, "An unattended woman can go in safety across the whole of Arabia and no one dares even to speak to her."

Riadh is a small city of perhaps ten thousand people. A fringe of date gardens surrounds it, but the water for these gardens must be drawn from wells about ninety feet deep, so that the profit is small. It is Bin Saoud's plan to bring in oil engines after the war is over, in the hope that their extent may be greatly increased. In that city men live for the next world. Hundreds are studying in the mosques to go out as teachers among the Bedouin tribes. It is the center of a system of religious education that takes in every village in Central Arabia, and imparts the rudiments of an education to much the larger part of the male population of the various towns. Great efforts are being made now, to educate the Bedouins. Men pray five times a day in Riadh. In the Winter the roll is called at early morning prayers, and also at the service in the late evening. Absentees are beaten with twenty strokes on the following day. In the Summer, duties in the date gardens and elsewhere are considered a valid excuse for praying at home. Only a few years ago, a man absented himself for some days from all prayers, and was publicly executed for so doing. It is safe to say that there is one city on this earth where men are more interested in the next world than they are in this one. Late dinners are unknown. The evening meal is eaten an hour before sundown so that there may be time for religious readings and exhortations before going to bed. That is the regular program in the house of the great chief himself.

We stayed in Riadh for twenty days. We were invited to stay longer but our stock of medicines was exhausted much sooner than we anticipated. The people came in great crowds. Some days over three hundred were fighting for an entrance. It was impossible to maintain order, and sometimes the results were interesting. However we treated all that we could, and the next time we hope to take another assistant, and accomplish more. Even as it was, the service was most heartily appreciated.

We left with a cordial invitation to come again. To be sure it will require a definite permission at a suitable time next year, to make that invitation of any value, but it indicates we hope that this preliminary visit is to be the first of many, and indeed eventually lead to a permanent occupation.

There are not many places in the world more important or more difficult to occupy with the Gospel. The fact that we have set our feet inside of that city does not indicate that our difficulties are finished. We have progressed a little way, and now as never before is there need for prayer that God will work out His purpose in that country. The opening of Riadh in this preliminary way is a triumph of the faith of those who pray for Arabia. Human skill and energy had very little to do with it. May we be even more faithful and earnest in the days to come, that out of the small beginning of today there may come a permanent occupation of the Capital City of the empire of Mohammed for Christ.

Missionary Personnalia

The Rev. and Mrs. Samuel M. Zwemer sailed from Port Said April 10, 1918, traveling by way of China and Japan across the Pacific to America where they hope to arrive about the middle of June. Dr. Zwemer comes in response to the invitation of the Laymen's Missionary Movement to participate in the campaign of the coming year. Mrs. Zwemer and the children come on a somewhat hastened furlough in order that suitable provision for the education of the latter can be made in America.

The Rev. and Mrs. F. J. Barny at the expiration of their furlough are expecting to sail from Vancouver on the Empress of Japan on October 10 on their return to Arabia.

The Rev. and Mrs. John Van Ess, after spending sometime in the East in visits to Churches and Societies, returned to their home in Chicago in the latter part of May preparatory to sailing from San Francisco on their return to Arabia on September 11 on the S. S. Colusa which goes directly to Calcutta and Columbo.

Mrs. Sharon J. Thoms has recently been appointed by the Board of Trustees as a missionary to the Arabian Mission, thus returning to the field where she has spent some years of her life with Dr. Thoms. She sails from Vancouver on October 10th on the S. S. Empress of Japan.